

**Testimony in SUPPORT of:**

Bill # **1017**: An Act Concerning Election Administration.

Bill # **6578**: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process

To: GAE Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Vice Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, and Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Members of the GAE Committee:

**In answer to the two questions before the CT General Assembly this session:** (1) Shall the Constitution be amended to permit the General Assembly to allow any voter, for any reason, to vote by **absentee ballot**, and (2) Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly to provide for **early voting**, **my answer** as a senior citizen, a voter, and one who was very happy to have voted by Absentee Ballot last November **is a resounding “Yes!”**

**We need real, structural change** in our voting system that would allow all mail-in voting and early voting if we want **to unleash democratic power in our state**. For the voters like me who reside in Bridgeport, the amendments proposed in **HJ 58 and 59 have the potential to**, once and for all, **clean up our local elections**. During the 2020 presidential election, thanks to the expanded access of absentee voting, Bridgeport far surpassed Connecticut’s other large cities with a record 72 percent turnout.

**The closed nature of Connecticut elections** — and the burdens placed on voters to exercise our right to vote — **mean local elections in Bridgeport are manipulated** because political actors continue to be highly motivated. These operatives are paid to abuse the absentee ballot process by targeting, defrauding and manipulating our youth, elderly, disabled, low-income and Spanish-speaking residents, all for the purpose of controlling the outcomes of our local elections.

Please make voting easy, convenient and accessible for ALL CT voters by voting **YES** in **SUPPORT** of bill number **1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration** to make the absentee ballot drop boxes permanent and enable voters to request absentee ballots via an online application and in **SUPPORT** of bill number **6578: An Act Concerning Participation in Electoral Process** for automatic voter registration at the DMV and to restore voting rights to parolees.

Sincerely,

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